



Temple Beth Israel invites all to join them for the Festival of Purim

Aruba's Jewish Community will celebrate the first night of Purim, this Saturday, March 3, at Temple Beth Israel in Oranjestad beginning at 7:00 P.M. Rabbi Marcelo Bater and the congregation invite all to join them for this festive occasion.

Members of the local Jewish community will congregate for the reading of the Purim Megillah, the "Scroll of Esther" with "great joy and merrymaking." It is a story of intrigue, oppression and ambition, lust, bravery and sacrifice that could make any episode of "Desperate Housewives" pale in comparison. In fact, it has been made into a TV movie on more than one occasion, with a parade of beautiful actresses playing the valiant young queen that saved her people from genocide.

The story of Purim takes place in Persia over 2500 years ago, after the fall of the first temple, while the Jewish community lived prosperously under King Achashverosh, more widely known as Xerxes. He may have been king, but he was hot tempered, hot blooded, and not the wisest of men. The story begins with him entertaining all the princes, advisors, and army officers of his 127 provinces for 180 days. (They certainly knew how to party back then!) Quite inebriated, he called for his beautiful wife Vashti to parade before them wearing nothing but her crown. Vashti, the proud descendent of royalty, refused, setting a bad example for spousal disobedience in those very chauvinistic times, and so she was banished. When the King sobered up, he realized his bed was empty, his guests were gone, and he had no TV to pass the time, so better look around for a replacement! Not just any girl would do, she had to be sweet, obedient, and comely, so all the beautiful girls of Shushan were brought to the palace to be examined by the King. Amongst these was Esther, the orphaned niece of Mordechi, a leader of the Jews, who raised her as a daughter. He advised Esther to submit, and to keep the fact that she was Jewish secret. King Xerxes could not resist her demure manner and beautiful appearance, and made her his queen.

Mordechi camps out at the palace gates, and overhears a plot to kill the king. He sends word to Esther, who informs the king, the plotters are caught, and Mordechi's good deed is recorded in the historical scrolls of King Xerxes reign.

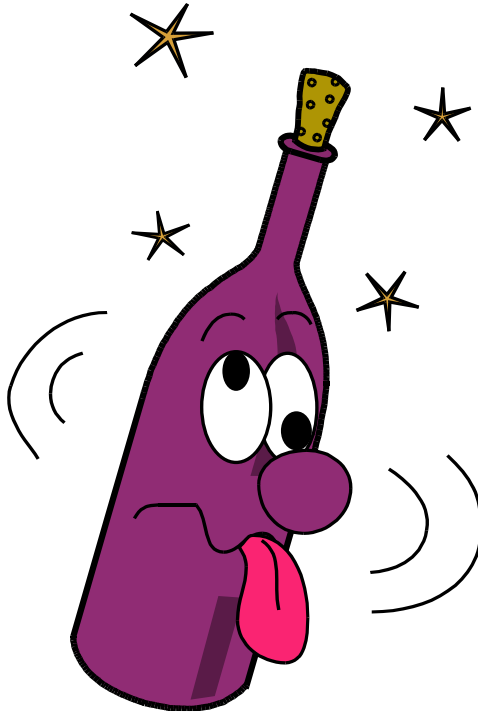
Now enters the villain of the story, Haman. During the reading of the scrolls of Esther during the Purim festivities it is traditional to distribute noisemakers that everyone uses whenever the name of Haman is mentioned, which is quite often. Think of it as a way of giving a big raspberry whenever the name of the man who tried to murder the entire Jewish community is uttered, only not so messy.

In short, Haman literally purchases the Jews of the Kingdom from a clueless King Xerxes only to declare they will all be executed in eleven months and their property confiscated. (Sound familiar?) Esther opens the eyes of the King at dire peril to herself, and the Jews are saved. Because of her courage, it is with great delight, particularly after the events of the last century, that Jewish communities everywhere gather to celebrate this joyous occasion with a great deal of wine consumption and sweets, including the traditional Hamantashen. These three cornered pasties filled with poppy seed or jam claim their name from many sources, but in Hebrew a hamantash is called "Ozen Haman" or "Haman's Ear." The story of Esther is a long, complex story with intrigue, humor and many crazy events, but has a happy ending, eventually. Because of that, the word "Megillah" has come to signify such a story.

Other traditions of Purim upheld by the Aruban Jewish Community lead by Rabbi Marcelo Bater is the collection of food and clothing for the poor, which is contributed to Ambiente Felis for distribution.

Whether dressed as a character from the story or not, a comical costume is another festive tradition of the holiday, as is the community participating in games and songs after the service. Anyone is welcome to participate and requested to bring a snack.

PURIM 2007



On Saturday, March 3rd, at Beth Israel Synagogue, we are going to celebrate PURIM together, at 7:00 P.M.

We hope you be there!!

GREAT FUN! MEGUILLATH ESTHER READING!!

Please bring a snack. We are having hamantaschen!
Don't forget your costume for this occasion!!!!

"...And there were joy and happiness for the Jews" (Megilath Esther)

Chag Sameach!!!!!!